

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding final Office Action mailed December 18, 2006. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

Present Status of Patent Application

Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 29, 32-34, 36-38, 43-45, and 48-51, and 53-55 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1-28, 30-31, 35, 39-42, 46-47, and 52 have been canceled without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of these canceled claims in a continuing application, if Applicants so choose, and do not intend to dedicate the canceled subject matter to the public. Claims 29, 32, 38, 48, and 53 have been currently amended with no addition of new matter.

Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

A. Indication of allowable subject matter

Applicants wish to once again express their sincere gratitude towards Examiner for indicating that claims 31, 32, 40, 45, and 52-55 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. In response to this indication, Applicants have currently amended the appropriate independent claims to incorporate the subject matter of claims 31, 32, 40, 45, and 52-55 together with any intervening claims.

Specifically, independent claim 29 has been currently amended to include the subject matter of claims 30 and 31; independent claim 38 has been currently amended to include the subject matter of claim 40; and independent claim 48 has been currently amended to include the subject matter of claim 52. Claim dependency of pending dependent claims has been appropriately amended.

Applicants respectfully submit that the currently amended independent claims are allowable because they now incorporate allowable subject matter, while the dependent claims are allowable by law because of their dependency on allowable independent claims. Consequently, Applicants hereby request allowance of all pending claims.

B. Applicants' response to statements made in the Office action

Applicants have currently amended the claims in the interests of moving forward prosecution in the case and obtaining claim allowance. However, Applicants wish to place on record their traversal of several statements made in the final Office Action mailed December 18, 2006. A detailed explanation of the reasons for the traversal would be pointless at this stage. Consequently, Applicants opt to desist from doing so. However, it will be understood that Applicants' traversal is directed towards overcoming any negative estoppel that may possibly be associated with statements made in the final Office action.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 29, 32-34, 36-38, 43-45, and 48-51, and 53-55 are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims is hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the Undersigned Representative at (404)-610-5689.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this paper is being electronically transmitted to the Commissioner for Patents on the date shown below:

Date of transmission: 1 February 2007

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